



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Huntington District

Marmet Locks and Dam Replacement Project

November-December 2005 Issue No. 17

This newsletter is provided as a courtesy of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers as a way to keep the citizens of Belle, W.Va. up-to-date on activities during construction of the replacement lock at Marmet Locks and Dam. The newsletter is intended to provide information on current and future activities throughout the construction of the replacement lock.

If you know someone who would like to receive future copies, complete the form on the back page of this newsletter.



Above photo shows the current status of the upstream approach wall shafts.

Corps of Engineers file photo

Next community workshop:

Date: Thursday, Jan. 19, 2006
Time: Between 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
Place: Corps Construction Office
1923 W. Dupont Ave., Belle, W.Va.

Who to contact for information:

Mike Keathley, Project Manager.....304-399-5864
Dennis Hughes, Resident Engineer.....304-949-1935
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Marmet Website: <http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/projects/current/marmet/>

Construction Activities

Over the last several months, construction activity has been non-stop. Some of the work included continuing work on the upstream guide wall piers, the nose cell, monolith work in the new lock, backfill operations for the new operations building, and wetland construction and planting.

All 14 piers of the upstream guide wall are complete. The next step will be excavation of the retaining berm and placement of the prefab guide wall beams on top of the piers. The guide wall beams are being built off site and will have a 10' x 10' hollow-core cross-section, be 120' long, and weigh an estimated 550 tons each. Work is expected to begin late next spring.

Excavation to rock for the upstream nose cell is complete, sheet piling has been driven and concrete placed. Necessary steps to complete this work will be anchor installation and additional concrete and structural reinforcement. The nose cell is expected to be complete by late February 2006.

Work in the lock monoliths continues with a total of 21 monoliths "topped out", meaning the concrete work is complete with the exception of structures to be placed or erected on top of the lock wall. Concrete placement for the monoliths has slowed due to the winter weather and over the next few months will likely be sporadic to take advantage of the warmer daytime weather.

Backfill operations have begun for the operations building. The contractor hopes to complete backfilling to allow construction to begin on the foundation by early 2006. The operations building, which will house the visitor center, is expected to be operational by mid 2008.

Wetland construction is complete except for planting and stone slope protection along the embankment. Planting and natural vegetation growth in the wetlands has occurred over the last several months and will continue. Also, several Wood Ducks and different species of turtle have moved into the wetlands area even before the construction is complete!

The total project is about 64% complete now. The new lock is expected to be operational in the spring 2008, and the entire project completed by spring of 2009.

Quarterly Community Workshop

The next community involvement quarterly information meeting hosted by the Corps of Engineers is **Thursday, Jan. 19, 2006, between 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.** at the **Corps Resident Engineer's Office, 1923 W. Dupont Avenue, in Belle, W.Va.** . It is not necessary for everyone to arrive at 4:30 p.m. since the presentation and tour lasts approximately 30 minutes per person. Therefore, come later if you would like; presentations and tours will continue until 7:00 p.m.

These information workshops are held quarterly to provide information to the community about the ongoing construction activities and seek input on how the Corps and contractor can reduce impacts to the surrounding communities. Corps representatives are available to answer questions and provide tours of the construction site.

What is a Wetland?

Several people have asked about the two wetland ponds recently constructed at the upstream end of the project and why they are important.

Wetlands are a special type of ecosystem where certain species of plants and animals have adapted to life in around water. Some wetlands, such as swamps and marshes, are easy to recognize, but others may not be as easy to recognize because they are dry at certain times of the year or they just don't look very wet from the roadside. Typical wetlands have shallow water or very damp soil. The soil in these wetland areas are low in oxygen, so plants have special features such as spongy stems that allow oxygen to be transported to their root systems.

There are over 5,000 plant types in the United States that may occur in wetlands. Some of those include cattails, bulrushes, cordgrass, and willows. In addition to plants, waterfowl, turtles and other wildlife can also thrive in these wetland areas. Because wetlands are some of the most productive and diverse ecosystems in the world, they need special protection.

Over the last 200 years, more than 50% of the nation's naturally occurring wetlands have been destroyed. Since wetlands are an important part of the nation's environment, laws were passed to protect wetland areas. When large construction projects, such as the one at Marmet destroy a designated wetland area, the loss must be replaced by creating or restoring a similar wetland area.

Wetlands are both beautiful and have a positive impact on the total environment. Acting as great sponges, they naturally filter and purify water, improving water quality and the overall health of the ecosystem. The rapid growth rate of wetland plants overflow into adjacent ecosystems offering food for fish and wildlife for great distances.

So now you know that by preserving our wetlands, we are helping the environment and enhancing the beauty, ecology and economy of our great Nation.

Community Relations

The Corps hosted an information workshop at the resident engineer office, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2005. About 10 members of the community participated in the workshop and project tours.

The following concerns and comments were raised at the meeting:

- 1) Citizens were appreciative of the addition of the 15th Street ditch.
- 2) Location of public access on the facility property when construction is complete. **This will be addressed in a future newsletter.**
- 3) What is a wetland? (see article this page)
- 4) Difficulty accessing the .ftp site to obtain photos. (If you have problems, contact Jeff Jezewski -304-399-5573 or 304-360-0292. Or you can email Jeffrey.Jezewski@lrh01.usace.army.mil.)
- 5) Kokosing/Fru-Con donated building foundation to support future site of two Belle Restoration Society Buildings which consisted of placing two gravel foundations on West Dupont Avenue in Belle. Belle Restoration Society hopes to have buildings ready for use early next year.

Answers and updates to concerns from previous workshops

- Replacement of upstream temporary fence is complete.
- Burning Springs channel relocation is now complete.

If you know someone who would like to receive future copies of the Marmet Newsletter, complete the form below and return to **Mike Keathley, US Army Corps of Engineers, 502 8th Street, Huntington, WV 25701-2070** or send us an email requesting to be added to the mailing list.

_____ Yes, I would like to receive the Marmet Lock Replacement Project Newsletter.

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